

1938
Youth

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT ...
LOVE, JOY, PEACE

Religious Education

EXHIBIT

Pacific School of Religion



The Dancing Prophet / R. C. Hodgell



CONFRONTATION (detail) by Hodgell

The Easter story brings to a head my doubts about Christianity. I can readily believe that Christ died for me, and that his spirit still lives, but I find the resurrection terribly hard to accept.

—Beth Taylor / Skokie, IL

Easter so often seems mystical and so far off for me and I try to search for relevancy in a day when that's not always the easy thing to do.

—John Spencer / Winchester, MA

What would have happened if Christ hadn't died and risen again? Would we still have held him in such high esteem? Why did he really die?

—Priscilla Southerly / Falls Church, VA

Why do the gospels differ in reporting the details of what happened at the tomb after Christ's resurrection?

—Jerry Baxter / Dayton, OH

Did the disciples themselves believe that Jesus was resurrected?

—Chip Tucker / Rumford, RI

Am I out of style because I have faith? I feel that my faith is strong enough not to doubt the Easter story. Must we have questions?

—Arthur Severance / Laconia, NH

The Easter story seems unbelievably but I still believe.

—Nancy Stover / Waynesboro, VA

The question, "After Easter, then what?", has always bothered me.

—Mike Bloom / Muscatine, IA

BY ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN/What could be more obvious than that Jesus' crucifixion meant that he had been rejected by God, and that he was not the promised Messiah after all? Messiahs don't "hang on a tree"; they conquer, they rule in glory.

Now that, whether we like it or not, is the way most first century people reasoned when confronted with the preposterous claim that Jesus was the Messiah for whom they had been waiting. We have to face very squarely the fact that this is so. Jesus did not win all the multitudes to him by a pleasant personality. He won a few people, yes (though most of them deserted him in the pinch and left him to go to his death without them). But many other people rejected him vigorously and absolutely. They flatly denied his claim, called it a blasphemy, and did their best to get him executed once and for all. They succeeded.

Or at least, they thought they did. The fact that his death was not the end of the story is a fact we shall presently have to examine. But before we do so, we must realize that his life was a "failure" in the sense in which we ordinarily use that word. What kind of Messiah would be put to death in the first century equivalent of an electric chair, as a common, ordinary criminal, after successful prosecution by both the religious and the civil authorities? A strange Messiah indeed, hardly worth a second glance!

And yet, there were those who *did* take a second glance. They were the ones who flew in the face of the facts, talked about victory when only tragedy was apparent, spoke in cheerful voices when they should have been sad, smiled when they should have been weeping. Why were they different from the other 99½ per cent? Take a look at them.

Look at these followers of Jesus immediately after their leader has been captured, convicted in a "framed" trial, and put to death. They are *bewildered* by the quick reversal of fortunes which they and their leader have suffered. Jesus, who had been with them at supper just a night or two ago, now lies cold and dead in a tomb. They are *disillusioned*. Jesus had talked of such wonderful things. He had done such wonderful things. But

Youth

Volume 17

Number 8

April 10, 1966

Editor: Herman C. Ahrens, Jr.

Associate Editor: Laura-Jean Mashrick

Art Consultant: Charles Newton

Admin. Secretary: Clara Utermohlen

Editorial address: Room 800, 1505

Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102

YOUTH magazine

is published

for high school young people
of the

United Church of Christ

and

The Episcopal Church

An Horizons edition is published

for young people of the

Church of the Brethren

YOUTH is also

recommended for use

among young people of the

Anglican Church of Canada

YOUTH magazine is published every other week throughout the year (except during July and August, when monthly) by the United Church Press. The Horizons Edition is distributed to Brethren youth by The General Brotherhood Board—Church of the Brethren.

Publication office: 1720 Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. 63103. Second class postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa., and at additional mailing offices. Accepted for mailing at a special rate of postage, provided for in Section 1103. Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 30, 1943.

Subscription rates: Single subscriptions, \$3.00 a year. Group rates, five or more to one address, \$2.40 each. Single copies, 15 cents each, double issues, 25 cents.

Subscription offices: *United Church of Christ:* Division of Publication, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102. *Episcopal Church:* Circulation Department, YOUTH magazine, Room 300, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102. *Church of the Brethren:* General Brotherhood Board, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Ill. 60120.

Prayer (page 32) by Laura-Jean Mashrick.

that was all over now. He had only been spinning out a dream. When the real pinch came he was powerless and the dream had dissolved like a puff of smoke. You can see them getting ready to sneak out of Jerusalem and go back to their fishing nets saying to one another, "I'll never get taken in like that again." They are frightened. They are meeting behind locked doors. Why? The reason is very simple. They were afraid. They had been seen with Jesus. Jesus had been killed. Who would be next? The Romans had plenty of crosses. Let the Committee of Un-Roman Activities look their way, and then they would be going through a "framed" trial, and death by torture.

That is what the disciples were like immediately after the death of their leader. An unpromising group of men, bewildered, disillusioned, and frightened. Nobody would expect them to amount to anything.

But they did amount to something. They very soon began to amount to a great deal. And to complete the story we must look at another picture of the same group of men. This time the canvas can't be confined to a little room with a barricaded door. It has to be wide enough so that eventually it will include the whole Roman Empire. Take another look.

Instead of being bewildered, they are immensely sure of themselves. They have been galvanized into action, and are going far and wide proclaiming what they call "good news," in temples and market places to fish peddlers and Roman officers. Instead of being disillusioned, they are full of confidence, and have almost naive joy in sharing a tremendous experience which has trans-

formed them. Rather than walking about with leaden feet, they are filled with a mysterious power which they call holy. Instead of being frightened, they are full of an infectious courage, and are going all over the place literally shouting about the same sorts of things for which their leader had so recently been killed. The more they are told to keep quiet, on pain of death, the more gladly do they speak. In fact, they made such a dent on the people around them, that very soon their enemies (not their friends, but their enemies) were calling them "men who have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17: 6).

Why a tiny
minority
disagreed
with the
majority

What brought about this amazing transformation? Quite inescapably, it was their unshakable conviction that Jesus had not been held by the grave in which he had been put after he was quite dead, but that God had raised him from the dead and that he was with them, beside them, among them, as a living and active presence. The "risen Christ" was no theory to them, but a fact, a fact of their own experience. They knew he was alive because he and they were once again in intimate fellowship. And as we look at the record of the things they did, the sermons they preached, the letters they wrote, the stories of Jesus which they compiled, a startling fact emerges. The basis of the whole enterprise was not (as we are often led to believe) the ethical teachings of Jesus, but rather the "good news" of the resurrection.

It was indeed "good news" on every level of life. It vindicated the claims of Jesus, and the faith the disciples had had in him. It showed that even out of a catastrophe like the crucifixion God could make something supremely good. It showed that death need no longer be feared, since God is more powerful than death, the Lord of life *and* death. It showed that God could take human sin (even the terrible sin of those who put Jesus to death) and triumph over that. It demonstrated, in short, that through death could come resurrection, that out of tragedy could come triumph, that even when men did their very worst, God could do his very best. This good news "upset" everything that people had believed before about God and his manner of working.

what is the evidence of the resurrection?

A quick look at the evidence should make clear how central this message was. The earliest specific written reference to the resurrection are in Paul's letters. In his first letter to the Corinthians, for example, he says that this resurrection faith is "the good news," the gospel, which he "received" when he became a Christian. It is "of first importance . . . that Christ died for our sins . . . , that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day" (1 Cor. 15: 1-4). But this is not just something Paul has been told. He lists those to whom the risen Christ had appeared, and then says, "He appeared also to me" (v. 8). The experience has been real for Paul himself. This resurrection faith is the Christian faith, "so we preach and so you believed" (v. 11). He even more strongly, "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (v. 14).

This kind of testimony stands out on almost every page of the New Testament. Christ is risen from the dead! Sing it! Shout it! Let everyone know! Because it changes everything.

We naturally have questions. We want to know as much as we can about such an event. Paul doesn't give us any details. For specifics we have to turn to the concluding chapters in each of the four Gospels (Mark, ch. 16; Matt., ch. 28; Luke, ch. 24; John, chs. 20; 21), although it is important to remember that the resurrection is presupposed throughout each book. What do we find?

The accounts give overwhelming testimony of the central fact of the resurrection, with differences about some of the details. Any honest person must recognize both these things. On the important matters there is agreement: Christ was not held by the tomb, he was raised from the dead, he appeared to his followers, they became sure of his living presence, and their lives were transformed by him. When you pin down the details you find, naturally enough, less than full agreement. Four writers long before newspapers, telephones, printed journals have different recollections and stress different things. They are not sure, for example, just who was at the tomb when the women got there to anoint the body. They are unable to agree as to precisely the kind of body the risen Lord had, that in some stories he can eat boiled fish with the

and in others he can appear and disappear at will.

These facts are pointed out since they often perplex readers of the stories. Why are there even minor disagreements? Let us imagine an unexpected event taking place today.

Two cars collide on the main street of your town in front of the high school.

You see the crash from the grocery store window.

Your cousin sees it from a parked car a block away on the other side of the street.

Some tenth-graders see it from the playground.

A policeman sees it from the corner.

Passers-by see the cars just after the collision.

If all these witnesses were hailed into court a few months later, any lawyer worth his salt would be suspicious if their stories tallied exactly on every last detail. People simply don't notice things that minutely, or remember them that well. The lawyer would suspect them of getting together to "put one over on him" by concocting a uniform tale.

Now imagine that thirty or fifty years later the witnesses are asked for information about the accident. What would they recall? They would be able to give clear and convincing evidence that there *had* been an accident. No disagreement there. But on the secondary details, the color of the cars, the speeds at which they were going, and so on, there would be understandable differences.

Now there is a considerable difference between an auto accident and a resurrection from the dead. And there is an element of mystery in the unparalleled character of the resurrection event which can be lost whenever we try to make too neat an analogy to explain it. A resurrection from the dead can never be fully "explained." But over and beyond that, our example can be at least dimly suggestive. When we look again at the resurrection accounts in the Gospels, we can see that the very differences of detail are a tribute to the fact that no one is "putting one over" on us. Four accounts (written by different men in different places in different years) which dovetailed neatly with each other would arouse our suspicions. The very differences underline the integrity of the central claim on which they all agreed—that the cross was not the end, but that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Had the cross been the end, let us remember,

the choice open to us

the disciples would have dispersed, cynical and disillusioned, and Christianity would never have gotten started. The thing that did get it "started" was the disciples' conviction that God had raised Jesus from the dead, that he was in fellowship with them, and that this world-shaking news had to be proclaimed at whatever cost, since it completely transformed the meaning of life. Since that day the fundamental note of Christian faith has been not sorrow but joy, not defeat but triumph. And the badge of the Christian has been not a long face but a radiant one.

What are we to make of this amazing story? We can, it seems, do one of two things with it. We can accept the testimony of Jesus' contemporaries, and let the startling fact work the same transformation in our lives that it did in theirs. Or, we can refuse to accept it, insisting that "dead people stay dead." We can say that the Biblical claim is so world-shaking that it couldn't possibly be true, that it is a bit of pious fiction, or a shabby invention by a group of deluded men who couldn't face the awful reality that their leader had been destroyed.

Both those options treat the Christian claim with something like the respect it ought to have. Both understand that this is a stupendous claim, not to be treated lightly or accepted glibly. Both understand that this claim is either the most significant truth of all time or the most barefaced nonsense ever perpetrated on the human race.

The thing which we are *not* entitled to do with this story is to try to eliminate it from the Christian account, to suggest that the disciples didn't really believe it, or that it was tacked onto their ideas by some later group of people. That is tampering with the facts in an illegitimate way. One who says that the resurrection faith is a delusion must have the honesty to grant that the first Christians were deluded, and that it is this delusion which is the foundation of the Christian religion.

It's either delusion or sober fact. You can't steer a middle course in between. ▼

ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN/A professor of religion at Stanford University in California, Dr. Brown is a well-known Protestant theologian who was one of the Protestant observers at the Vatican Council session "What Makes Jesus So Important" is reprinted here by permission from *The Bible Speaks to You* by Robert McAfee Brown, copyright 1955 by Westminster Press.



He Is Risen / R. C. Hodgell

FROM RUBBLE AND RUIN... A REBIRTH



LOVE

To a group of Episcopalian teens from Alabama, the rebirth of a bombed-out English community has been made real by friendships which span the Atlantic. Listen to their response (*in italics*) to the story of the Cathedral of Coventry. Author of the article is Jean Louise Smith, free-lance writer and specialist in religious art, who visited Coventry last year. Writing for the Alabama teens is Mrs. Peggy Horn Rupp, who as youth adviser for the Diocese of Alabama accompanied the first group of Alabamans to Coventry.

BY JEAN LOUISE SMITH / Most of the people who gathered around the fiery ruins of St. Michael's Cathedral the morning after the bombing of the city of Coventry, England, were either quite young or old. The young men and many of the women were off to war—some of them, perhaps, dropping bombs on the very cities in Germany from which these planes with their incendiary bombs had come. That blitz on November 14, 1940 was the longest single-night bombing and the most destructive for any English city during the Second World War.

Nothing was left of the Cathedral but the tower and crumbling outside walls. Someone in the stunned group that crowded around the ruins picked up two pieces of charred wood and nailed them together in the form of a cross. He thrust it into a trash barrel and set it where the altar had stood. At this moment, a strange and wonderful spirit began to move among the people. Instead of bitterness and hatred for the enemy and for this destruction, there came a united, firm opinion that the Cathedral should be rebuilt and in the spirit of love and reconciliation.

Sixteen years passed before the foundation stone was laid, and it was not until 1962 before the striking structure, designed by Sir Basil Spence, was open for worship. Then began an unending stream of people to see the modern and controversial art and architecture of the Cathedral.

In the summer of 1961, Coventry reached into Alabama in the person of the Rev. Edward Patey, then Canon Residentiary of the Cathedral of Coventry. He arrived at Camp McDowell, the Episcopal Conference Center, tired from the long trip, suffering from August Alabama heat, and looking quite unlikely to involve anyone in anything! During the week-long youth conference he told Coventry's story, and the word "reconciliation" began to come alive for all who heard him. We wanted to go to Coventry Cathedral and become involved in its ministry.

The wheels began to turn, and in July 1962, just two months after the Cathedral's consecration, we stood there, quietly meditating and unbelieving. "We can't really be here, but we are!"—15 Alabamans in the nave before the Charred Cross, the Cross of Nails, and "Father Forgiveness."

Not only nails, but also thorns are repeated in the art of the Cathedral to keep the meaning of the suffering Christ ever-present. The wrought-iron entrance screen to the Chapel of Christ in Gethsemane clearly resembles a crown of thorns. One looks through this screen to the opposite wall of the chapel—a golden mosaic, picturing an angel who offers the cup of suffering to Christ. A crown of thorns is incorporated into the design of the mosaic floor in the Chapel of Unity—a gift of the Church of Sweden. But perhaps, the most unusual use of the thorn-theme is in the "Avenue of Thorns" which is a delicately conceived canopy over the choir stalls and a bishop's throne in the chancel.

We were drawn through the open porch and clear glass wall, etched with saints and "jazzin'" angels, by the great, beckoning tapestry of Christ in Glory above the altar.

Graham Sutherland's massive tapestry is the largest in the world: it dominates the chancel, behind the altar, stretching from ceiling to floor, and from one side to the other. Christ the Redeemer in Glory is seated with his hands raised in blessing. A dwarf of a man (but life-sized!) stands between his feet. Within square medallions, two on either side, are represented the four beasts mentioned in the book of Revelations. Above them St. Michael wrestles with the Devil. Below all of this is a gray and black portrayal of the crucifixion. The background color for the entire tapestry is bright green, with gold lines setting off the individual figures. Christ's robe is almost dazzling in its whiteness.

A lot of people don't like this tapestry and complain of its severity and formality. This is to miss the point that the figure of Christ the Redeemer in glory is a statement of reconciliation—it balances the repeated themes of suffering made by the symbolism of the nails and the thorns.

We were overwhelmed by the dazzling brilliance of the Baptistery window with its promise of joy and new life in Christ. The Chapel of Unity across the nave theater seemed to call us to unity with all Christians. The glass wall that had drawn us into the majesty and beauty of the Cathedral now





Presenting a "porch play" at the cathedral

An



directed us back out into the world! We could see the strong, compassionate figure of St. Michael triumphant over the devil. The great Cathedral had reached out and taken us in only to throw us back into the world again! We were to study and work there for two weeks (a fortnight we earned to say), trusted to help interpret this unusual place to people of many nations; trusted to look honestly at our own ministry of reconciliation back home.

One never gets away from art at Coventry. The International Centre of Christian Reconciliation, built from the old vestry by a group of German youth, includes a reception room, a lounge, a snack bar, and a chapel where a sculptured mural in bronze shows a man reaching out to a cross asking for forgiveness. In front of this stands a bench, covered with a Norwegian cloth tapestry, on which are set Bibles in many languages.

The Centre is a comfortable place where young people meet to relax, talk, plan, rest, play chess, have a snack, or a quiet moment in the chapel. A hostess is there to assist with travel plans and make introductions. The Centre is one of the meeting places for the Cathedral Youth Club whose activities include discussions, crafts, sports, and service to the community.

Coventry youth go out into the world. They have visited Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, East Berlin, Dresden, Luxembourg, Taize—to carry on their work of reconciliation. And each summer youth come to Coventry from all over the world participating in the Cathedral's ministry to the community and to the hundreds of visitors who come to the Cathedral each day.

We Alabamans worked in the Cathedral bookstore, struggling to count pence, shillings, and pounds. We worked in the International Youth Centre; in the porch plays; in the Cathedral as stewards. We met with British school children, members of the Hamburg St. Katherine's Choir, and members of the Cathedral '62 group. We visited in factories, schools, neighborhood churches, and lived in homes of Cathedral families, sharing their life and sharing ours with them. We studied with the Cathedral staff.

(Turn to page 18)

music

At the international centre/Photos by Richard Sadler



Entrance to the Chapel
of Christ in Gethsemane

On the floor of the ruined sanctuary
of Coventry Cathedral are these
words:

FATHER, FORGIVE

*"All have sinned and come
short of the glory of God."*

—ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO
THE ROMANS

The HATRED which divides
nation from nation,
race from race,
class from class,

Father, forgive.

The COVETOUS desires of
men and nations
to possess what is
not their own,

Father, forgive.

The GREED which exploits
the labours of men,
and lays waste the earth,

Father, forgive.

Our ENVY of the welfare
and happiness of others,

Father, forgive.

Our INDIFFERENCE to the
plight of the homeless
and the refugee,

Father, forgive.

The LUST which uses for
ignoble ends the bodies
of men and women,

Father, forgive.

The PRIDE which leads us to
trust in ourselves
and not in God,

Father, forgive.

*"Be kind one to another,
tenderhearted,
forgiving one another,
As God in Christ forgave you."*

—ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO
THE EPHESIANS





Typical community activities in which the Service and Study Program has engaged include the clearing of a church yard, cleaning and redecorating rooms and halls in churches, working with immigrants, helping with children in industrial areas, and recreational and handicraft activities with children in welfare centers, mental homes, and the like. The summer work is concentrated into three months, but a great deal goes on throughout the year. An International Youth Assembly attracts large numbers.

The new John F. Kennedy House accommodates many of these visitors and workers. Others live with parishioners in their homes. All who attend the service and study programs go to the daily services of worship in the Cathedral—indeed the programs would not be complete without worship.

Drama at Coventry does not take familiar forms—plays deal with present day problems in a context of Christian hope. The “porch plays” for which Coventry is well-known, are 20-minute presentations based on such subjects as civic responsibility, the meaning of life and death, and family relationships. The plays are presented three times a week, for three weeks on the wide steps which lead from the porch to the ruins of the old Cathedral. They are presented at noon and late on Saturday afternoons, to passers-by and visitors to the Cathedral.

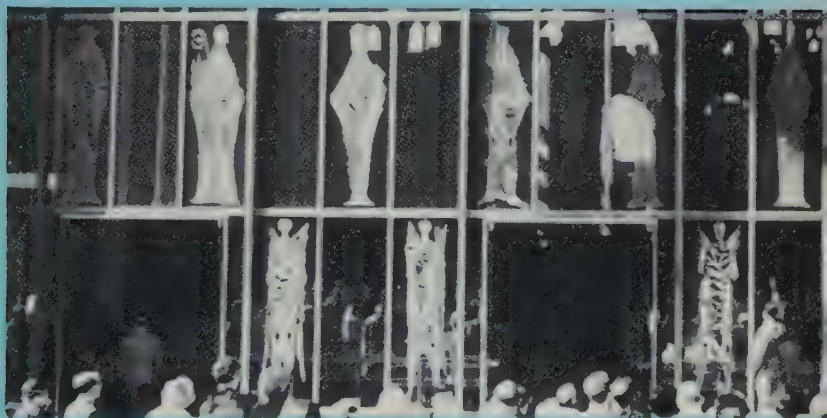
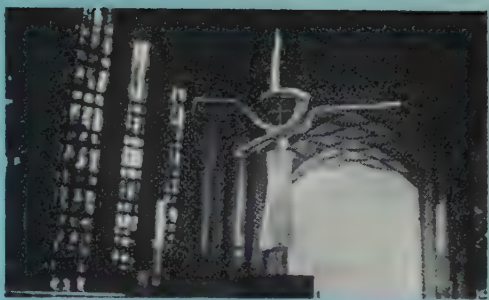
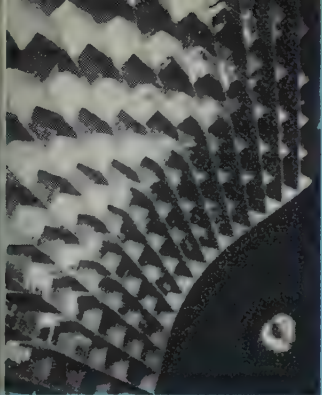
During the year, several full-length dramas are presented within the Cathedral on the stage which is the entrance to the Chapel of Unity. Actors are frequently young people who join with local repertory companies. A full-time drama director supervises all of this program.

Alabama young people have participated each summer in the program at Coventry and have learned the joy of working with people from other backgrounds. One boy after that first summer observed, “Now that I am home, I have discovered what it all meant. I know for the first time that the janitor at my church is a real person with the same sort of problems that I have; he feels as I do when he’s sad, happy or confused. He is Negro and I am white, and we are alike, and you know, he knows that I know now! A small beginning, you say? We begin where we are, as Coventry did.”

This exchange between Alabama and Coventry has become two-way, with young people from Coventry also visiting Alabama. Young people have reacted: “Worship was never so meaningful before. People from many nations and churches can worship together.” “Even by washing dishes, now I was helping to spread the message of reconciliation.”

We look forward expectantly to this coming summer when another Alabama group goes to Coventry and a group of 36 German young people whom we met through Coventry comes here. A plaque from Alabama in the International Centre, a Coventry Cross of Nails in Alabama, and letters speeding back and forth from Alabama, Coventry, Germany, and other countries are all indications of a deep, abiding and growing relationship.

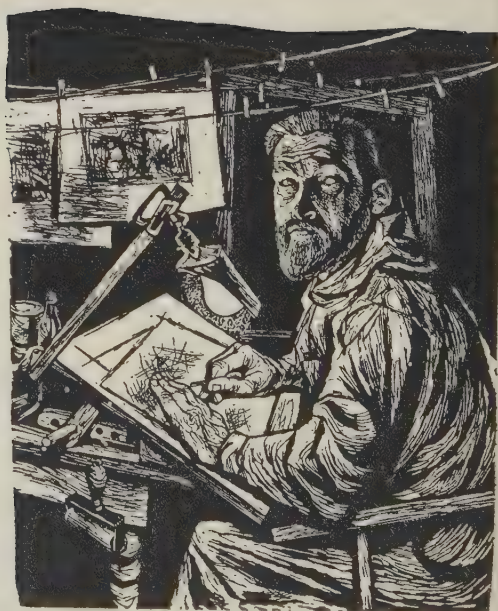
These are young people who are given to do more than talk about reconciliation—they are engaged in doing it; in translating thought into action in the hope that the work of their hands will in some measure relieve the world’s confusion and suffering.





Robert Hodgell

"This always seemed an appropriate introduction to my prints . . ."



Self-portrait by Robert Hodgell

"I've known so many young artists struggling for a personally identifiable style that I wonder about my own lack of concern for it. I think it's because I'm less interested in a personal identity than in communication."

Art to communicate ideas

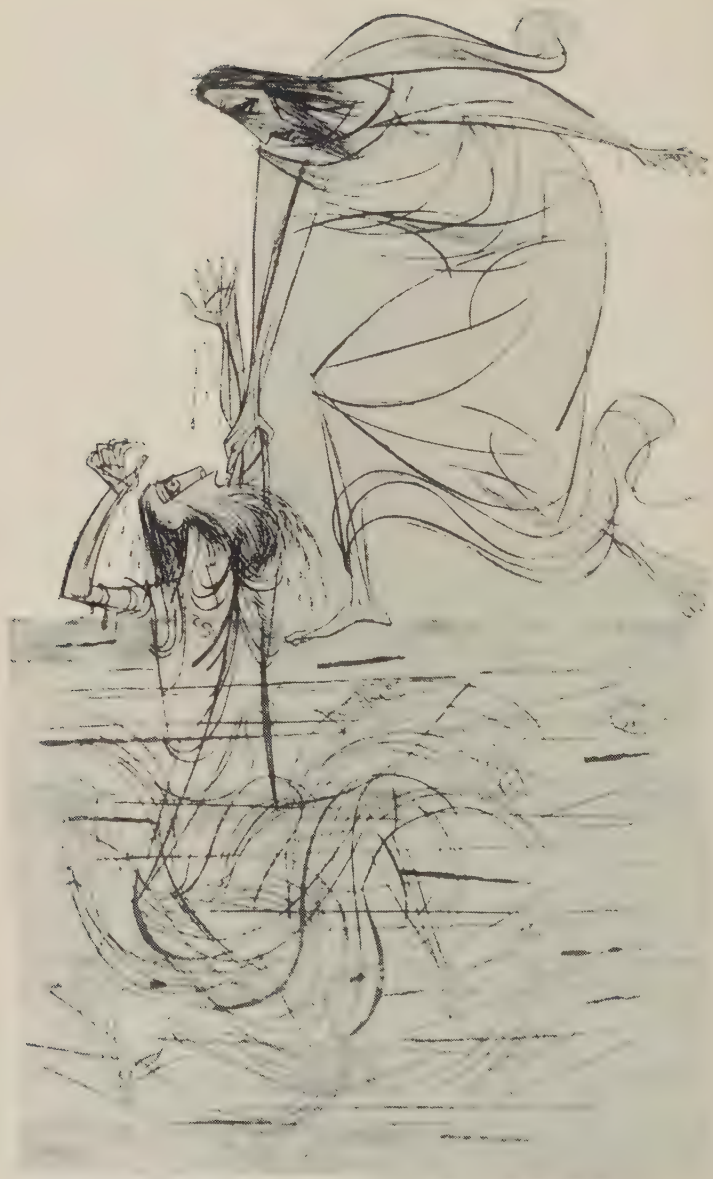
Robert Hodgell was born in Mankato, Kan., in 1922. He has been an art major at the University of Wisconsin, Big Ten high jump champion, a Navy deck officer in World War II, a free-lance artist, and an instructor and professor of art in several universities. As an artist, Hodgell works in several media, but is better known for his linoleum cuts, especially those which deal with biblical themes or which are satires on the church or the current world situation.

"I still feel that it's ideas that must be communicated because they are more important and worth communicating than sensations of color, texture, pattern, etc. While these latter can be frivolous as ends they can be powerful as means of communication.

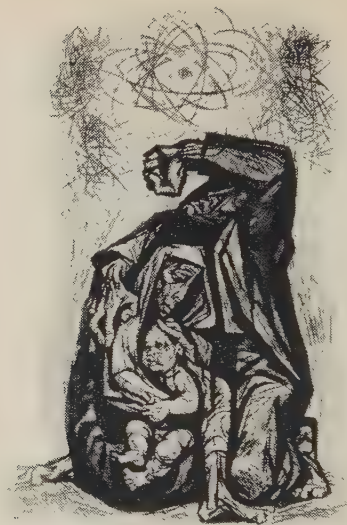
"To be idea-oriented rather than style-oriented is not commercially sound nor acceptable by contemporary aesthetic standards. (I had a visit the other night from a friend and he said he hoped I wasn't still doing those 'lawful religious satires.') I think I'm as aware of contemporary styles and trends as the next man, but in most of my work I am experimenting with finding better and more effective ways of presentation. I have a strong conviction that style and medium are the vehicles for the presentation of ideas—not the reverse."

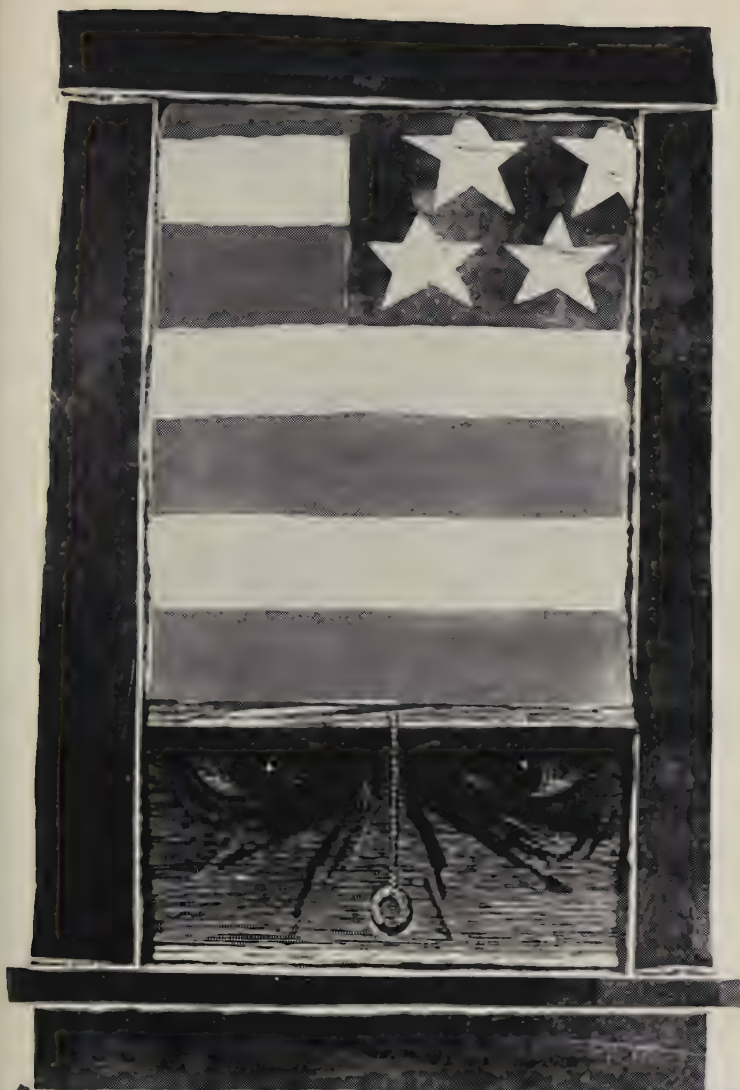
"I don't want my viewer to look at people, but to participate in the experience. I've tried to do a portrait of an EVENT and in doing so the symbols most likely to be understood are the basis of the visual language."

"I have relapses, of course, but art is still basically a sense of calling. When I was a Navy trainee, I applied for a transfer to the chaplaincy services. I was rejected; they had more interest in a quick supply of deck officers. But more significant to me, Harold Ehrensperger, then editor of *Motive*, also advised against my going into professional church work. His advice puzzled me at the time, but I'm growing to appreciate the wisdom of it."









"EXTREMISM, IN DEFENCE OF LIBERTY, IS NO VICE"



All prints used by permission
the artist and MOTIVE magazine





a man dies

*Teens swing with the Bible
in a modern musical plot*

Is the story of the Bible meaningful to teens today?

"Not really!" decided Rev. Ernest Marvin of St. James Presbyterian Church, Lockleaze, Bristol, England. But, what if the story were told in modern language, in media popular with teens, and with biting insight? And, so, he joined a former Old Vic actor, Ewan Hooper, and wrote a musical drama entitled, "A Man Dies."

Did they succeed? It all depends on your point of view. Many adults have said, "No." And in Britain an attempt was made in the House

commons to have the broadcast of a TV version banned on the grounds of bad taste. Yet, since it was originally performed by the teenagers of St. James Church at Easter in 1960, the drama has enjoyed wide popularity among teens—both in Britain and here in the United States. In New England, an ecumenical group of teens including Roman Catholic, United Church of Christ, Methodist, and Episcopal young people did a production with the approval of their respective churches. Four different companies of teens have produced it in the Massachusetts-North Connecticut area, and some Presbyterian teenagers offered it in the Maryland area. In the summer of 1964, the Barn Playhouse at Stony Point, N.Y., did a production as part of their summer season.

"A Man Dies" uses the form of the Medieval Mystery Plays and combines satire, humor and social comment in telling the gospel story. And, like those religious plays of old, it is performed in the dress and language of the day and uses contemporary music and dance—which today means folk songs, rock, jazz, and jive.

Songs and action in the play draw parallels between topics of today and the biblical situations. For instance, in the first song, "How Long, Lordie?", the misery of the Jews in Egypt is compared to the burden borne by those suffering from racial discrimination today. The Mystery Plays were performed before an audience who were unable to read the Bible; "A Man Dies" is for and about people who are able to read it, but see no reason why they should.

The drama opens with the Israelites in bondage in Egypt—and traces their deliverance, their sojourn in the desert ("Do us a favor; Here's a hell of a mess/ You promised us honey, This is a wilderness."), the giving of the Ten Commandments, the worship of the Golden Calf ("Dear God, Give me a telly, And a washing machine for the wife. And a spin drier, And a car, And a house, And a fridge. Let me win at Bingo, And on the premium bonds, And on the football pools. Make me a good boy, Amen."), and the final entrance into the Promised Land: "Split the trumpet, Bust the drum, Yell to God, The victory's won.

The Narrator condenses the intervening 1200 years of Hebrew history and brings us full circle to the enslavement of Israel under the Romans. We see the despair of the people in the song, "What's the use?"—verses of which are interspersed by the narrator's reading the announcement of Jesus' birth and the story of his early life, his calling of the disciples, and the beginning of his ministry, and by contemporary songs about Jesus' life—for example: "Just look at him, See over there now, No decent chap behaves like that. You see the kind of man you find. Let's put him on the mat."

Act II deals completely with the events of Holy Week—Judas decides to "sell the cops," rationalizing, "He says He's God; He can take care of Himself." The act ends with the resurrected Christ passing through a crowd

which ignores him as Singer sings, "You've never had it so good, brother"

In Part Three, the disciples go from singing the blues to rejoicing in the resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Saul encounters Christ; and the early church begins its work. The schism in the early church over the need to be a Jew before being a Christian is portrayed in modern terms by church-goers who expect other Christians to be just like them. In one of the final songs, the Singer reflects:

Now I see

God has no favorites

No special nation
No special church
No special people.
His love is worldwide.

First he told the Jews
We didn't listen.
He sent his prophets
We killed them.
He sent his Son
We strung him up

Why?
He healed people
He loved people
He didn't kill people
He was powerful
He was the Christ
We strung him up
The Christ

God raised him from the grave
He ate and drank with us.

With me.
He ordered me to tell you all
That's why I'm here.
To baptize you in his name.
And now I see he meant
Not just the church
Not just the Jews
But everybody.

"A Man Dies" ends with "The Lord's Prayer" chanted slowly against the beat of the drum.

If you're interested in reading the book, copies are available from The British Book Centre, Inc., 122 East 55th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022, for \$2.25, plus postage. Or, if you'd like to hear the words set to music, a recording of "A Man Dies" is available from your own record store at \$5.87. It is distributed by Capital Records International Corporation.

Perhaps your own youth group might be interested in doing a production of "A Man Dies." Scripts are available for 25 cents each from ABC Weekend Television in England (Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex, England). Twenty scripts are necessary. It is also necessary to notify Margaret Ramsay, Ltd., 14 Goodwins Court, London W.C. 2., of any performances, because royalties must be paid to them. The fee is somewhere between six and fifteen dollars.

"A Man Dies" is controversial. Audience reactions have varied widely. . . how would you or your group react? Perhaps, as one young performer said, "I don't know how the audience felt, but acting in 'A Man Dies' made the story of Christ come alive for me."



Photo by Clinton Daily Item



The Last Supper is depicted by a teen-age cast in an ecumenical production of "A Man Dies" in Clinton, Mass.

Here we are through Lent, God.

It's Easter . . .

but that's not how I act—

I act as if—

"Well, that's over for another year!"

God, help me to rejoice and be glad . . .

To feel the reality and wonder of the
resurrection

with my whole being;

To be able to mean "Hallelujah!"

as I mean my shouts of joy

when I discover a truth and

really understand it;

when someone cares;

when work I've done is

praised and appreciated.

May the reality of Easter awaken this

depth of feeling and meaning

in all my life,

so I can look at life—

and death—

and shout

"Hooray!"